



wildsight

TEACH THE COLUMBIA

Journeys through the Columbia River Basin

Guiding questions

What diversity of landscapes, ecosystems, communities, and climates are present in different parts of the Columbia River Basin? What can we learn about these different kinds of places through various modes of exploration (such as by water, by land, or virtually)? How do images and journeys enrich the knowledge we can gain from maps?

Learning goals

Students will learn about the geography of the Columbia River Basin by hearing from different travellers who have experienced the watershed in their own ways.

Students will reflect on and relate to these stories through their own adventures, aspirations, or interests concerning the Columbia River Basin.

Students will gain an appreciation for various ways to create a deeper connection with place.

Students will witness (through images and stories) how the river and its surroundings change as it flows downstream.

Students will plan their own journey along the Columbia River or through the watershed.

Materials

- **Columbia River Maps**
- Interview videos:
 1. **Interview with Graeme**
 2. **Interview with Claire**
- Writing materials

Preparation

Ensure videos and images are set up to present, and every student has materials (writing, typing, and/or drawing) to create their own journey.

Instructions

Total time: 75 minutes

1. Show Journey Interview videos from **Claire Dibble** and **Graeme Lee Rowlands**. Advise the students to take notes on new things they learned about the Basin, and anything that they found inspiring. **45 mins**
2. The students will now plan/write/type/draw their own journey along the Columbia River or through some part of the watershed. Encourage them to think about what they would want to do, see, or learn, how they might travel (by boat, by foot, by bike, by car, etc), what kinds of places they would like to explore, possible highlights of the journey (such as significant places to stop at), and how long they would like to explore for. Students can add more detail and address other questions as they see fit. Encourage students to think creatively and imagine something that sounds really exciting, but also prompt them to consider what it would take to really make that journey. **20 mins**
3. Direct the students to share their journey with another student, or present to the class. **10 mins**

Extensions

- Explore videos produced by **War Pony Pictures**; an Indigenous owned, multimedia company dedicated to capturing stories from members of North American Indigenous nations. For example, **Calling the Salmon Home** (15 minutes), a story about salmon restoration, told through a canoe journey.
- Research Christopher Swain, who swam the entire length of the Columbia. He has an interesting **blog** as well as a documentary film: **Source to Sea: the Columbia River Swim** which also outlines some of the issues.
- Watch *Voice of the River* **short** (13 minutes) or **full version** (42 minutes); created by Sanne van der Ros. This film is dedicated to youth developing

deeper connections to their watershed. This film follows Columbia River Field School students as they become closer to their home watershed over the duration of a two week canoe trip journey. Vimeo passcode for both videos is watershed-education.

- Use Google Maps satellite view or Google Earth to explore specific areas of the Basin in a more detailed way.
- Re-watch the **Google Earth virtual flyover** to get a birds-eye view of the Columbia River Basin and many of its different features.

Curriculum links

Science 9

Social studies 10

Social studies 11

Earth Science 11

Environmental Science 11

Human Geography 12

Physical Geography 12

Appendix

Journey Interview Questions:

1. What inspired you to undertake this journey?
2. How did you travel along the river? Where did you start and end your journey?
3. In a short description, how would you describe the geography of the Columbia Basin? How does it change as you pass through different regions of the Basin?
4. What places along the Columbia River did you find the most interesting?
5. What are some of the most impactful moments of your journey that have stuck with you today?
6. What are your concerns and hopes for the Columbia River?
7. What advice would you give to someone who is looking to explore the Columbia River Basin?